Department of the Environment

Room A126
Romney House
London SW1P 3PY

Direct Line 071 276 8599
Divisional Enquiries 071 276
Fax Number 071 276 8626
GTN Code 276

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Your ref

Our ref

Date 18 November 1992

Dear Sir or Madam,

PROPOSED LOCAL ENVIRONMENT CHARTER

I am writing to invite the comments of your organisation on the scope and content of this new Charter, which is part of the wider Citizen's Charter initiative.

As you may know, the Secretary of State announced in July his intention to issue a Charter for local authority environmental services. The Government recognises people's concerns about the quality of their environment. The Charter is one of the many measures it is taking to improve and protect the environment. It will cover the local environment services provided by local authorities which are of most concern to individuals, many of which were included in the Department's booklet "Green Rights and Responsibilities" published in February. I enclose a copy of the booklet for ease of reference.

The Charter is being developed by a working group which includes representatives of the Department, local authorities, the Audit Commission and consumer and business interests. Many local authorities have produced their own charters covering these services and the Group want to build upon this good practice in the Charter. They also want to ensure that the views of consumers are taken into account. Our aim is to publish the Charter in the Spring.

The Charter will elaborate further the three major areas of environmental rights identified in "Green Rights": the right of access to environmental information held by public authorities; the right to participate in the decision making process on environmental issues; and the right to seek appropriate remedies in the event of shortcomings in environmental services. "Green Rights" related to existing rights. The Working Group are considering how these can be developed further within existing resources. The Charter will also highlight examples of good practice by authorities which may go above and beyond statutory duties upon them.

Rights entail responsibilities, especially so in regard to the environment. The Charter will therefore also encourage people to take action themselves in their every day lives to protect the environment. It will emphasise that the quality of the local environment depends upon everyone's actions, not only those of central and local Government.

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As well as environmental services such as litter collection, recycling, control of statutory nuisance and air pollution control the Working Group propose that the Charter should cover other services which also affect the quality of a neighbourhood. For example licensing of premises for entertainment and maintenance of pavements. In consultation with the National Planning Forum (which comprises representatives of the Local Authority Associations) the Government is giving separate consideration to how Citizen Charter principles can be incorporated into the operation of the planning system.

The Secretary of State is keen to extend consultation on the charter to others, especially environmental and consumer groups. The Working Group is therefore undertaking this written consultation exercise. The Department will also draw on research to establish the views of the individual consumer.

I attach in the Annex a draft framework for the charter. I should be grateful for any written comments you may have on:

* the proposed scope of the charter;
* any gaps in existing rights, or areas where existing rights could be strengthened within existing resources;
* any examples of good practice by local authorities which we might include; and
* suggested action which people can take themselves to improve the environment.

Please send your comments to Rosemary Griggs, Department of Environment, Room A127, Romney House, 43 Marsham St, London SW1P 3PY , (Tel: 071-276 8659), by Thursday 31st December.

The Department may wish to make responses to this letter open to public inspection in the Department's library. Unless you specifically indicate that your response is confidential, we shall assume that you have no objection to your response being treated in this way and would be grateful if you could supply an extra copy for this purpose.

This consultation exercise specifically seeks views on the position in England. Separate charters will be produced for Scotland and Wales and separate consultation exercises will be undertaken there.

Yours faithfully

John Stevens

J S STEVENS
Environment Protection Central Division

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Suggested Consultation List:

Local Authorities
Association of County Councils
Association of District Councils
Association of Metropolitan Authorities
Corporation of London
London Boroughs Association
National Association of Local Councils
Association of National Parks Authorities
Local Government Management Board

Government Bodies
Audit Commission
Countryside Commission
English Nature
Inland Waterways Association
National Rivers Authority
Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution

Professions and Industry
Advisory Committee on Business and the Environment
Aluminum Can Recycling Association
Aluminium Federation Ltd
Association of Municipal Engineers
Association of British Chambers of Commerce
Association of County Public Health Officers
Association of Light Alloy Refiners Ltd
Association of Noise Consultants
Association of Playing Fields and Landscape Management
British Association of Landscape Industries
British Foundries Association
British Glass
British Plastics Federation
British Public Works Association
British Rubber Manufacturers Association
British Scrap Federation
British Secondary Metals Association
British Textiles Association
British Waste Paper Association
Chemical Industries Association
Confederation of British Industry
County Planning Officers Society
County Surveyors Society
Electronic Engineering Association
Federation of Small Businesses
Forestry Industry Committee of Great Britain
Galvanizers Association
Groundwork Foundation
INCPEN
Independent Waste Paper Producers Association
Institute of Chartered Foresters
Institute of Chemical Engineers
Institute of Civil Engineers
Institution of Environmental Health Officers
Institution of Environmental Sciences
Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management
Institution of Mechanical Engineers

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Institute of Packaging
Institute of Wastes Management
Landscape Institute
Law Society
Metal Packaging Manufacturers Association
National and Local Government's Officer's Association
National Association of Waste Disposal Contractors
National Association for Urban Studies
National Chamber of Trade
National Council of Women
National Dog Warden Association
National Farmer's Union
National Union of Public Employees
Paintmakers Association
Reclamation Association
RECOUP
Royal Forestry Society
Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors
Royal Institute of Public Health and Hygiene
Royal Town Planning Institute
Society of Motor Manufacturers
Steel Can Recycling Bureau
Timber Growers (UK)
UK Environmental Law Association
UK Recycling Council
Vehicle Builders and Repairers Association
Water Services Association Water Companies Association.

Voluntary Groups
Action with Communities in Rural England
Advice Services Alliance
Age Concern
Airfields Environment Federation
Ark Foundation
Association for the Reduction of Aircraft Noise
Bristol Mediation Service
British Council of Organisations of Disabled People
British Pensioners and Trade Unions Action Association
British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
British Horse Society
Black Environment Network
Byways and Bridleways Trust
Civic Trust
Common Ground
Community Recycling Network
Community Service Volunteers
Confederation of Indian Organisations
Conservation Foundation
Consumers Association
Council for Environmental Education
Council for the Protection of Rural England
Country Landowners' Association
Environment Council
Federation of Independent Advice Centres
Friends of the Earth
Greater London Association of Disabled People
Green Alliance
Inland Waterways Amenity Association

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Law Centres Federation
Mediation UK
Merseyside Environment Trust
Mersey Basin Campaign
MENCAP
National Association of Citizen's Advice Bureaux
National Consumer Council
National Council for Voluntary Organisations
National Council of Women
National Federation of the Blind
National Federation of Consumer Groups
National Federation of Retirement Pensions Associations
National Joint Committee of Working Women's Organisations
National League of the Blind and Disabled
National Playing Fields Association
National Society for Clean Air
National Trust
Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation
New Consume
Noise Abatement Society
Noise Council
North East Environment Network
Open Spaces Society
Pedestrians Association
Pet Advisory Committee
Plain English Campaign
Ramblers Association
Right to Peace and Quiet Campaign
Royal National Institute for the Blind
Royal National Institute for the Deaf
Royal Society for the Protection and Care of Animals
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
RSNC Wildlife Partnerships
Rural Voice
Spastics Society
Save a Can
Tidy Britain Group
Tree Centre
Tree Council
Town and Country Planning Association
Towns Women's Guild
Waste Watch
West Indian Standing Conference
West Midlands Environment Network
Wildlife Link
Women's Environmental Network
Women's Institute
World Wide Fund for Nature
Wyecycle
Youth Clubs UK
Youth Hostels Association
Urban Environment Trust
Urban Pollution Research Centre
WARMER

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NEIGHBOURHOOD ENVIRONMENT CHARTER

DRAFT OUTLINE

Introduction

Explanation of local authority structure and environmental responsibilities

Summary of general good practice by authorities

Individual environmental services

Refuse Collection
Recycling
Noise control
Statutory Nuisance

Community environmental services

Litter and Dog nuisance
Waste Disposal
Air Pollution Control
Monitoring of drinking water including private water supplies
Common Land registration
Tree Preservation
Parks

Planning services

Planning in relation to chaNges in the neighbourhood
(Resume of planning rights and cross reference to planning initiatives in Citizen's Charter.)

Highway services

Traffic Calming
Parking controls
Pavement and road maintenance
Rights of Way

Licensing

Dancing and Music
Take-aways and all night cafes
Amusement arcades

Sources of further Information

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